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TEACHER'S GUIDE

David M. Williams

MONTREAL 1850-1870

City Life in Canada One Hundred Years Ago

H.GD.

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INTRODUCTION

This is not a textbook. It is a combination **sourcebook** and **study guide.** It provides pupils with carefully selected historical materials and some suggestions about how these materials might be used. Together the materials and activities will let the children write their own history of a colorful portion of Canada's past.

Pre-Confederation Canada is often portrayed as a pioneer, rural society. Although not highly urban by today's standards, Canada, in the period from 1850 to 1870, was in fact well above the world average in terms of urbanization.*

Montreal: 1850-1870 is intended to provide pupils with an in-depth study of Canadian urban life in the mid-19th century. The dominance in trade and commerce of Montreal, relative to other Canadian communities, was even greater then than it is today. During the middle decades of the 19th century, Montreal grew to become the first city in Canada with a population of more than 100,000. Though it possesses many of the features common to most modern North American cities, Montreal, nevertheless, was and is a city with many unique problems and characteristics of its own.

*L. O. Stone, *Urban Development in Canada,* 1961 Census Monograph, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, Canada, 1967, pp. 14-15.

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CONCEPT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The emphasis in this study is not upon mastery of a large body of factual content, but on the development at differing levels of a few significant concepts and skills.

Concepts

Change (and **Continuity**)—Its nature, rate, and direction;
Similarities and **Differences**—Between past and present; between one community or event and another;
Causes and/or **Motives**—What happened? Why did it happen? What does it 'mean?'

Skills

Reading and **interpreting** source materials;
Discussing, debating, and **explaining** differing viewpoints and interpretations;
Recording the results of observation and inquiry by means of lists, charts, time-lines, maps, sketches, and reports;
Asking questions of the evidence about SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES in communities and events, and about nature, rate, and direction of CHANGE;
Making "guesses" about possible answers to questions posed and **locating** and **selecting** evidence to confirm or deny these "guesses" or "hunches;"
Weighing the evidence and **reaching conclusions** after **considering alternatives;**
Reporting to others in written and/or oral form the results of one's inquiry; and,
Working with others and **participating** in inquiry groups, discussion groups, and groups involved in the presentation of reports.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The materials and activities contained in this study should provide opportunities for the development of three objectives: (1) an awareness of Montreal as a particular example of 19th-century Canadian urbanism; (2) a recognition of a "Concept of City," applicable not only to Montreal, but also to the pupil's own community and to urban communities in general; and, (3) some understanding of the work of the historian, of the kinds of questions he asks and the kinds of skills he possesses.

(1) Montreal as the major Canadian city of the 1850's and 1860's exhibiting a wide range of urban characteristics which included:
   a. a well-developed financial-commercial core;
   b. fine public buildings, churches, hospitals, etc.;
   c. well-developed communication and transportation systems including newspapers, printing houses, bridges, canals, railway and port facilities;
   d. parks, theatres, libraries and educational facilities; and,
   e. residential areas with dwellings ranging from elegant mansions to tenements.

   (Though economically dominated by the English-speaking merchants, Montreal was socially and politically bicultural—or even multi-cultural. It was, in fact, well on its way to becoming a truly cosmopolitan city.)

(2) "Concept of city" as developed through an awareness of the following ideas:
   a. a city has a setting;
   b. a city has a personality;
   c. a city has people;
   d. a city is a market place;
   e. a city is a place of work;
   f. a city needs transportation;
   g. a city needs communication;
   h. a city is a 'way-of-life;'
   i. a city has problems;
   j. a city needs local government;
   k. a city changes.

(3) Some of the skills of historical and social inquiry:
   a. observation and analysis of such source materials as pictures, written documents, statistics and maps;
   b. working with the kinds of questions historians ask of their data; and;
   c. weighing of one piece of evidence against another.

AIDS TO ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Development of Vocabulary

Though care is taken to develop vocabulary in the context of the study itself, some items may require particular attention. Pupils can be encouraged to recognize and use those items that seem of particular importance by means of the following exercises:

(1) The keeping of a cumulative list by individual pupils of those words that they find particularly new or difficult;
(2) The practice of using a personal or classroom dictionary to check the meanings of new and/or difficult words;
(3) Brief written compositions in which pupils are required to use newly-acquired words that seem worth mastering.

A limited amount of new vocabulary is deliberately introduced in **Montreal: 1850-1870.** Of particular importance, in terms for future use, are the following:

bilingual
commercial
goods and service occupations
indicators of change
local government
native origin
rate of growth
raw materials
residential
rural
social standing
urban
document
elevation
evidence
eye-witness
lithograph
location
methods of research
photograph
site
statistics
vantage point

Time and Chronology

Development of a sense of time and chronology is of course a difficult task, even for many adults. However, some idea of relative time span and sequence of events is necessary to an understanding of *change through time.*

Personal and family time-lines will help pupils develop a personal sense of past/present and sequence of events. Such time-lines can then be extended back three or four generations to the period of Montreal between 1850 and 1870. The important consideration is to relate such activities to the pupils' own experience of relative time-spans and of chronological sequence. It may come as a surprise to many children, for example, to discover that when their own parents were children, television and jet aircraft did not yet exist. Lawrence Senesh suggests a useful way of thinking about chronology in terms of *generations*, which he arbitrarily defines as periods of 33 years.* By this reckoning, three generations constitute about a century. On this basis, pupils might develop a rough time-scale such as the following:

Event	Date	
Parent as child	approximately 1938	1 Generation Ago (or 1 Parent-Time Ago)
Grandparent as child	1900-1910	2 Generations Ago
Confederation	1867	3 Generations Ago
Montreal incorporated as a city	1833	4 Generations Ago
Maisonneuve founds Montreal	1642	10 Generations Ago

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY

Creation of interest and enjoyment is an important objective of school history and social studies. This enjoyment may arise from pupil- or teacher-stimulated curiosity, from use of varied and interesting materials, and from involvement in varied and engrossing activities. Teachers will find opportunities to extend the ideas and approaches suggested in this book through the study of local history, through artistic expression (including role-playing) and through purposeful debate and controversy in the classroom. 'Dull' school history can too often permanently discourage youngsters from the pursuit of history both as an area of inquiry and as a fascinating body of literature for further enjoyment in later years.

*Lawrence Senesh, *Our Working World: Cities At Work,* Resource Unit (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1967), p. xii.

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*Asterisks indicate most readily available sources.

ACTIVITIES

Range of Activities

While the study provides a number of activities, teachers may wish to select from among the suggestions provided, or, to *substitute* their own ideas.

Activities include: discussion questions, seatwork activities, research topics, enrichment activities, and suggestions for local study. Questions range in difficulty from those eliciting fact or detail to those involving comparisons, inferences, analyses, generalizations, and values. In this way it is proposed that skills and understandings can be developed simultaneously by pupils of varying ability and maturity.

Flexibility of Activities and Pupil Groupings

Teachers may wish to use a flexible system of grouping the students. Many of the suggested activities are well suited to: (1) individual reading and research; (2) small-group projects; and, (3) class or large-group presentations.

It may be that some pupils will study all of the materials provided in this book; other pupils might study only a few of the materials or spend much time on a few of the activities while omitting others.

Activities involving Comparisons to Contemporary Life

Pupils should be encouraged to draw comparisons between the materials presented in this study and present-day conditions or circumstances in their own community. Thus, questions raised about the situations and problems faced by Canadians in the past can be applied to present situations in general and to the pupils' immediate experience in particular.

For example, questions regarding the needs of mid-19th century Montrealers for police and fire protection can be applied to the pupils' own community. Similarly, value questions regarding 'violence' in mid-19th century Montreal can lead to consideration of violence in modern society. Pupils then may avoid developing the attitude that what they are learning through a study of mid-19th century Montreal is inapplicable to present situations and current experience.

Naturally, the pupils' own community will often be a valuable source of history and social studies materials and resource persons. Suggestions for the use of local resources are provided in the study itself and in this guide.

Inquiry Activities

It must be remembered that there is not just one 'right' answer to some of the questions posed in this study. Many of the questions ask pupils *to identify clues, features, and evidence* to be found in one or more source materials, *to weigh evidence,* and *to make inference from limited data.* Responses to such questions and activities will vary in quality and detail depending upon the care and ingenuity exercised by pupils. The sophistication of pupil responses will also depend upon their previous experience with inquiry learning.

Pupils should be encouraged to ask their own questions of the data provided, and, where possible, to seek further evidence beyond that provided in this study in order to answer such questions. The reference list provided in this guide indicates, with asterisks (*), those sources that are most likely to be available.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THIS STUDY

For Classroom and Out-of-Classroom Use

Collection of pictures, maps, artifacts, and written materials concerning the history of the local community:

The amount and variety of local history material available will vary from community to community. In attempting to locate pictorial, written, and other local history material, give consideration to the following sources:

i. Old buildings still standing that might be photographed or sketched;
ii. Family albums and collections of photographs of early community life;
iii. Recollections of 'old-timers' including the parents and grandparents of class members;
iv. Early maps of the community, available through the local library or museum, which students might be able to copy, and;
v. Local newspaper office, library, museum, or archives for sources of early community newspapers.

Collection of newspaper and magazine materials on the past and present of Montreal:

Examine current and back issues of *Macleans, Saturday Night, The Star Weekly,* the daily newspaper, etc., for articles on Montreal. Many articles were published on such events as EXPO 67, the St. Léonard riots, etc. How often do events occurring in Montreal, our largest city, receive coverage in our daily newspapers? Why are these events important or unimportant to the rest of Canada?

Preparation of personal, family, and local history time-lines

Preparation of individual scrapbooks containing material on local history or on Montreal history

A visit to the local museum, archives, or library to study the records of the past:

Among the questions students might attempt to answer while visiting the local library, museum or archives are the following:

i. What records of our community's past have survived? In what forms? Why have they survived?
ii. How/Why are they kept?
iii. What sorts of records is our community failing to preserve? Why?
iv. What could be done to preserve more systematically our community's past?
v. How/Why would you and your community benefit from saving some of its past?

Pupil interviews of friends, grandparents, and others regarding the changes that have taken place since their childhood, particularly in terms of the local community:

Examples of the types of questions students might ask 'old-timers' are the following:

i. When did you come to our community? Why?
ii. What hardships did you encounter settling here?
iii. How has the community changed?
What changes do you like? Why?
What changes bother you? Why?
What do you think will change in the community in the future? Why?
Would you like those changes? Why/Why not?

Production of a 'classroom newspaper' or tape-recorded 'radio news show' with class members reporting local or Canadian historical events as if they were current news items:

A radio or television news show might be organized as follows:

Select an interesting event.

Example: The day our town burned to the ground

You might like to choose: one event in the past; one event in the present; one event in the future.

Select the *media:* TV/radio/newspapers/magazines, etc. that would have been available (past)/are available today (present)/will probably be available (future).

You can then compare how 'reporting what happens' changes, depending on the time of the event, what media are available to cover the event, and the media used to cover the event, etc.

Set up the newspaper/radio/TV/magazine/news bureau to cover the story. Decide how you will go about it.

Example: You will need to know—

Who?
What?
Where?
When?
Why?

Assign class members to the different roles:

Participants
Spectators
Reporters
News Analysts

Conduct on-the-spot interviews from the different people's points of view.

Tape and then listen to your reporter's interviews, and the *editorial* comments of your news analysts.

Discuss how the reporting of the event was/was not different when you compare the radio vs the TV vs the newspaper vs magazine versions.

Evaluate the various stories. Do you feel that each medium (radio/TV/newspaper/magazine) gave a true picture of what happened? Give reasons to support your opinion. (What were the advantages and disadvantages of using each medium to tell what happened? Why is the choice of medium important when covering an event?)

Production of a school or local community history as a class project

For Study of the Local Community

A useful reference on the study of local history is H. A. Stevenson and F. H. Armstrong, (eds.), *Approaches to Teaching Local History Using Upper Canadian and Ontario Examples* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1969).

For Role-Playing

Role-playing is simply the impromptu dramatization of a problem or idea for class discussion. Role-playing activities are particularly appropriate for pupil examination of value conflicts and comprehension of differing points of view. Many opportunities for role-playing will undoubtedly arise involving the local community. Teachers who use this approach will find the following guidelines useful.

Teacher and/or class:

(1) Decide on situation to be dramatized;
(2) Decide on a few characters, name them, plan how they are related to one another;
(3) Select the players, give time for players to consider their attitude towards the issue;
(4) Have characters take their places and begin (Note: Teachers should cut-off role-playing before it begins to drag.);
(5) Have characters and audience discuss how they felt about their part in the proceedings.

A useful reference on Role-Playing in the Elementary Classroom:

Fannie R. and George Shaftel, *Role-Playing for Social Values* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

Among the opportunities for such role-playing suggested in **Montreal: 1850-1870** are the following:

(1) A meeting of Montreal's city council the day after the Gavazzi Riot (see p. 15). Were the mayor's actions justified in the circumstances?

(2) A discussion between English, French, and Irish Montrealers on the rapid changes taking place in their city during the 1850's and 1860's. Who benefited most from these changes? How were the three groups influenced and affected by the changes?

(3) Debate between a modern housewife and a mid-19th century Montreal housewife regarding the relative merits of modern supermarkets and Montreal's farmers' markets.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR USE OF DOCUMENTS IN STUDY

Many ideas for the use of the pictures, maps, written passages, and statistics provided in **Montreal: 1850-1870** are contained in the study itself. In general, problems of using historical documents fall into two classes, questions of *document criticism* and questions of *analysis* and *interpretation*. Questions of document criticism have to do with whether or not a document is, in fact, an authentic and credible bit of evidence surviving from the past. Questions of interpretation have to do with the meaning and importance we attach to the evidence contained in the document. Children can become involved in both types of historical enterprise.

More specifically, documents should be studied in terms of the following sorts of questions:

Document Criticism

i. What is the source of the document? With what time and place is it associated?
ii. Who is the narrator? Is it an eye-witness account?
iii. Is the document complete? What indications are there of gaps in the narrative?
iv. Is it a reliable account? How can we check this internally? externally (against other documents)? What evidence of bias can we find?

Analysis and Interpretation

i. What does the document say? What unusual vocabulary or usage must be clarified?
ii. What specific facts does the document contain?
iii. What can we infer from the document?
iv. What previously held ideas does the document confirm?
v. What tentative ideas (working hypotheses) does the document suggest?
vi. What comparisons can we make with present conditions or analogous events (similarities and differences)?
vii. What problems or questions requiring further research does the document suggest? What further evidence is necessary?

DOCUMENT 1 is a picture of the skyline of Montreal viewed from the site of Expo 67 (in the foreground). The body of water is the St. Lawrence River. The rise of land towards Mount Royal is seen in the background of the picture.

DOCUMENT 7, a map, provides *site* characteristics that pupils should note:

(1) Montreal is on an island in the St. Lawrence River;
(2) Most of the land is below 200 feet in elevation;
(3) Immediately behind the 1850 city site, the land rises to elevations of over 400 feet and even 600 feet in the vicinity of Mount Royal; and,
(4) Montreal is located 'just below' the Lachine Rapids, a natural *transportation break* on the St. Lawrence River.

DOCUMENT 8, a map, provides *location* characteristics that pupils should note:

(1) Montreal is near the junction of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers;
(2) Montreal is considerably *inland* in relation to such Atlantic ports as Halifax, New York, Boston, and Portland, Maine; and,
(3) Such ports as Halifax, New York, and Boston are not subject to closure by winter ice as is Montreal.

DOCUMENTS 9 and 10. Document 9 is a *lithograph*—a picture copy produced from the engraving of a line drawing, whereas Document 10 is a *photograph*—a picture produced by a light exposure process. The period from 1850 to 1870 was characterized by the shift from lithographic to photographic techniques.

DOCUMENT 19, "A Glimpse of Childhood in Montreal," can be extended by reference to Edgar Andrew Collard's *Call Back Yesterdays* (Don Mills, Ontario: Longmans Canada Limited, 1965).

DOCUMENTS 20, 21, and 22. Care must be taken to avoid misplaced emphasis on Montreal as a 'violent city.' Winnipeg had its General Strike (1919) and Vancouver its Post Office Riot (1938) and race riots (1907). By the same token, Grey Cup festivities in Montreal in 1969 were much less violent than similar earlier events in Vancouver and Toronto.

DOCUMENTS 17 and 37, maps of Montreal in 1845 and 1846, use the spellings given on the maps of the period on which they were based.

DOCUMENT 50, "A City Changes," also necessitates the careful effort to avoid equating the idea of *change* with the idea of *progress*. Change may be growth or decline, progress or regress. Pupils should be encouraged to ask "What is lost?" as well as "What is gained?" when considering long-term versus short-term change.

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